

FREE
SPIRITS





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FREE SPIRITS

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The English Department
of

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1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a study of the properties of the function $f(x)$ defined by the equation $f(x) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n^2} \cos \frac{2\pi n x}{\lambda}$. It is shown that $f(x)$ is a periodic function with period λ and that it is continuous everywhere. The function $f(x)$ is also shown to be differentiable at all points except at the points $x = k\lambda/2$, where k is an integer. At these points, the function has a jump discontinuity of $\frac{1}{\lambda^2}$.
2. In the second part of the paper, the function $f(x)$ is studied in more detail. It is shown that $f(x)$ is a periodic function with period λ and that it is continuous everywhere. The function $f(x)$ is also shown to be differentiable at all points except at the points $x = k\lambda/2$, where k is an integer. At these points, the function has a jump discontinuity of $\frac{1}{\lambda^2}$.
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The People of Cornerville

Meet slow Pete,
The one with bad feet.
Meet Jive Sam,
Who doesn't give a damn.

Meet Bad Bob,
The one who robs.

Meet mad Phil,
The one who kills.

These are the people of Cornerville.
To be over twenty, they'll never live.
There's a Cornerville everywhere under
the sun.
Every town has at least one.

Why are they there?
What do you care?
They're not in your neighborhood,
The one that's all clean and good.
No, they're here
For us to fear.

--Samuel Thompson

I Am A Reefer

I am a reefer and I am continually used.
After smoking me for so long you abuse me.
You smoke me because you want to be cool,
But I am only smoked by sad fools.
While we are together, sure we are tripping out--
Laughing and screaming all in one shout.
But you will lose your strength and power;
It's just a matter of time
Until you become so weak
That you think I'm not enough;
Then you'll move on to more powerful stuff.
Once you reach this destructive day
You'll find I--"the destroyer"--led you that way.
I'm the one who got you started on dope,
But now you are the fool who just can't cope.

--Barbara Ratliff

Life Is Filled With Complications

Life is filled with complications
both great and small.
No matter how hard you try
you just can't solve them all.

Some may take a year to solve
or maybe even two.
Some can get so out of hand
you don't know what to do.

You don't know whether to scream
or just sit down and cry.
Life can get so complicated
you can just lie down and die.

People are always complaining
each and every day.
About anything and everything
when things don't go their way.

Everybody wants to lead,
nobody wants to follow.
Some expect you to jump and run
at their every holler.

Everybody wants to give the orders
nobody wants to follow.
With a world composed of only leaders,
who's left for heaven's sake!

Who's left to enforce the orders,
to see that people obey?
Ah, the world is full of leaders
who can't lead anyway!

--Sharron Johnson

If I Were

If I were the sunshine,
I'd shine on you every day.
If I were your employer,
Each day you'd get your pay.

If I were a little bird,
I'd sing you the sweetest song.
If I were God,
You'd never do wrong.

If I were a soul saver,
I'd save your troubled soul.
If I were time,
You'd never grow old.

If I were sugar,
I'd sweeten up your life.
If I were to marry,
I'd want to be your wife.

If I were a mail carrier,
You'd never get a sad letter.
If I were a poet,
This poem would be better.

If I were love,
I'd conquer your fleeting heart.
But since I'm neither of these,
I'll just give you my heart.

--Gloria King

I Often Wonder Why

Why do I have to be mistreated,
Never appreciated or happily greeted?
Why am I stood against and called no-good?
Why am I stepped on and misunderstood?
I often wonder why,
Why am I cheated, lied on and scorned?
Is it something my mother did before I was born?
Why am I looked upon as the least?
Why can't I find happiness and peace?
I often wonder why.

Why am I always down?
Why do I see so many frowns?
I often wonder why.
Why don't my sisters and brothers love me?
Why is no one found with fault but me?
Why do I feel like a motherless child,
And my life isn't peaceful and mild?
I often wonder why.
Why am I so sad and everyone calls me bad?
I often wonder why.

Why is everyone getting mad and
I've lost the friends I thought I had?
Why is it so hard and I'm about to fall apart?
I often wonder why.
Why am I always wrong?
Why am I still holding on?
I often wonder why.

Why??

--Sheila Johnson

Yeah, I'm Hip

Yeah, I'm hip.

Watch me dip.

I'm no fool.

I'm too cool.

I left school.

I'm real bright.

Stay out all night.

Never live right.

Run from light.

Oh, whatta sight!

I lived fast.

Forgot the past.

Lost my head.

Guess I'm dead.

--Samuel Thompson

Yesterday

Yesterday I didn't care about anything but myself.
I had no room in my life for anyone else.
People were something used for playing games.
Hell, the people I knew before, I don't remember
their names.

Yesterday I was a first-class fool.
Everyone I met I used as a tool.
Money was the force that kept me alive.
To get more money, I'd scheme and connive.
Love was a game, used when in need
Of some extra change to supplement my greed.
Affection was a farce that I used in a hurry.
I played the game well, scored quick then I'd scurry
Robbed, conned and stole to stay ahead of all others.
No one, not even my blood, would I call my brothers.
Walked the streets until my feet were raw,
Always staying one step ahead of the law.
Got married--for what? For spite and the little
money she had.

Thought that what I did was hip and classified myself
as bad.

But the girl got me, tricked me out of my life.
Here in the penitentiary experiencing all types of strife;
Here I've seen it all, and have great cause to worry.
I didn't do what I'm here for, but for the rest I'm sorry.
But now I've found a better life and I'm proud to say
That, behind me, I've put--Yesterday.

Yesterday, on the table;
Today, a ride in a van.
Tomorrow, I'll be
In Parchman* again,
Not liking hospitals.
I have to recover quickly;
I'm seriously opposed
To being sick
So I'll run and walk
And talk plenty of jive
And do my level best to stay alive.

Today

Where Yesterday I was blind, today I am finding myself.
I know for a fact I don't have to depend on anyone else;
I can tell my future, the things that will be.
I know exactly what is best for me.
I, learning about life from the inside out,
Have nothing to regret, no reason to pout.
Learning of love, and the joys that it brings
Learning, yes learning, oh how my heart sings.
To be given guidance, I don't have to send up a plea;
I know at this moment I'm the master of my destiny.
I know where I'm going, the things I will do;
I know that whatever it is will be done with you.
Where Yesterday my life was morose and sad,
Today I am happy and I'm so glad.
Glad that I changed from a fool to a man;
Glad that I learned how to understand.
If you knew me before, you knew the shape I was in;
You knew I didn't have the know-how, life to comprehend.
Today my life belongs to the people I love;
Not the people I am under control of.
I am happier still with life as it stands

*Mississippi State Penitentiary

For my future, I have many extensive plans.
Life today has become a great thing;
It's for you that I make the toll bells ring.

Tomorrow

What's in a future, what's in a dream?
Is anything the way that it seems?
Who makes the events of tomorrow come alive?
Who is the being that controls all our lives?
We all live for a day we know nothing about,
We plan and we plan, but we still live in doubt.
Tomorrow; who can say what it will bring.
For most of us, it won't bring a thing.
But, as for me, I have made plans.
For tomorrow, I have big demands.
Tomorrow, will bring me together with you
But not just for us, for the children too.
Tomorrow is more than just what I've planned;
Tomorrow are the days that I understand.
I believe that man makes his own tomorrows;
He makes his own joy; develops his own sorrows.
My tomorrow has been planned by my own hand,
And thoughts of you have helped me make all
of the plans.
The future is bright as I look and I see
That my future is meant for both you and me.
We'll have love and devotion
Among our many emotions,
But the main thing is that we will be together
And that togetherness will last forever.
So, I have no real worries, no real sorrow
Because I know what is coming Tomorrow!

--G. Theodore Hansom III

Dealing With Reality

I have now come to the realization
How a man, dissatisfied with life,
Can accept and even welcome death.
When he sees that his life is not taking form
When all of his efforts take turns for the worst
When he has nothing that is worth living for.

It isn't easy when no one seems to care if you
live or die
It's not easy when the things you do never turn
our right
It's not easy when you live with favoritism and
prejudice.

When things are like this, death is a welcome
existence or escape.
Death becomes a new world to conquer, a new realm
to explore.

Thoughts of it make one want to know what is on
the other side of the line.
Even I think of death--I who am too weak to take
my own life.

But I have something to live for;
I have a woman whom I love, children whom I adore.
There are no doubts that any man could ask for more.
But sometimes, life gets extremely hard
And one wonders if one is really living.

It makes you wonder if death isn't better than what
you've been getting.

I wonder: is death really an existence or am I
already dead?

If it is only an escape, it can't be worth living
and I am far ahead.

I have hopes, I have dreams, but the thing that
keeps me alive

Is that I have love, and before I found it I thought
I had died.

I don't want to find out if death is another form of
life, at least not at this time.

I don't have any reason to escape, for I have learned
All things in life, including death, are reality
And from reality you can't hide.

--G. Theodore Hansom III

Winter Irony

A glance at the window will tell:
Winter, with its ugliness,
 its inconveniences,
 its triteness,

Has stricken us with starkness.

Yet in this barren, gloomy atmosphere,
There is another feeling that
 comes upon reflection.

Sleeping in the ground,
Much like the figure of the resurrection,
Lies a lily,
Its appearance to be felt
Against the winter irony.

--Charles Wright

The Truth About Superstitions

When a person's nose itches, it's a sign that it should be scratched.

A black cat crossing your path signifies that the animal is going somewhere.

Thirteen at a table is unlucky when the hostess has only twelve chops.

Singing before breakfast is a forewarning of a fight with a neighbor--if the neighbor is trying to sleep late.

Throwing salt over the shoulder is likely to give the impression that the man who throws it has dandruff.

Finding a four-leaf clover is a sign that you have probably been down on your hands and knees.

To get out of bed on the wrong side probably means that you have had too much the night before.

To carry a rabbit's foot is a sign that you are a good shot with a gun--or have a friend who is.

When three men get a light from one match, it is indicative of the fact that they have only one match, or they are Scotsmen.

--Gardner Barnes

The Past--A Torch for the Future

Just as a candle lights the way down a dark path, so does our past light the way into our future. By looking at the glow of past humanities, we can see the radiance of what can be. By touching the spark of past struggles, we can feed the fire of future gains.

Yes, our past is truly a torch for the future. It is a torch that should be revered and respected. It is a torch that should be held high. It is a torch that should be held proudly. It is a torch of many things. It is the torch that Harriet Tubman used to guide the slaves through the Underground Railroad. It is the torch Dr. George Washington Carver used to carry out his great scientific experiments. It is the torch used by Mary McLeod Bethune when she took \$1.50 and built a little school for Negro girls. It is the torch Booker T. Washington used to find his way to Tuskegee Institute. It is the torch used by every captive slave in order to see how to survive from day to day. It is the torch that was used to see strength through the darkness of the days of the Ku Klux Klan.

The torch of the past is a mighty torch. It has provided a source of enlightenment for the millions of Black men and women in America today. Without the torch, would we have realized, in spite of our God-given right of being equal to all other men, that we have been denied that right for so long? Without the torch, would we have realized that there are still many things for which the Black race has to strive? Without the torch, would we have realized that Black men and women, with so little to call their own, gave so much to society?

The torch of the past appears in many forms. Every time Aaron Henry speaks out for civil rights, he is holding that torch. Every time Rev. Jesse Jackson shouts "I am somebody!" he is holding that torch. Every time Cicely Tyson portrays Miss Jane Pittman, or Harriet Tubman, the Black Moses, or Rebecca in "Sounder," she is holding that torch. Every time the Staple Singers sing "Respect Yourself," they are holding that torch.

The torch of the past is lighting the way for Blacks today. The light that Sojourner Truth shed as she spread her word throughout the nation is still being shed today by civil rights leaders such as Ben Hooks and Coretta Scott King. The light that shone when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man is still shining today through the actions of Black men and woman. The light that glowed as the preachers spoke in their little one-room churches is still glowing today as ministers spread the Word in every city of every state. The light that was emitted as Mahalia Jackson sang spirituals, as Bessie Smith sang the blues, as Dr. W. E. B. DuBois wrote his books, as Langston Hughes wrote his poetry, as countless men and women, boys and girls, slaves and freedmen, made their marks is still being emitted today. The torch that was handed down to us is still burning strongly.

So much progress has been made through the torch that burns with such brilliance. No longer are we required to act as animals because "that was our place." No longer do we feel that we have to be content with whatever crumbs are thrown to us. No longer are we only needed in jobs of maids, shoeshine boys, cotton-pickers, and the like. We can feel proud of who we were, who we are, and what we shall be. We can truly say that we are the best. For what other race has withstood what our race has and still survived? What other race has been so far down in the ground as ours has been and still managed to breathe air? What other race has

been denied so much and has gained in spite of those denials?

The past is a torch for the future. Through all these years, that torch has burned; and as the past of today and the future of tomorrow, it is the job of every adult and young person to keep that torch from being extinguished. It is our job and privilege to make certain that the torch is lit when it is time to relinquish it to the future generation. It is our job to see that the generations to come will be proud of who they are and will look at history books, biographies, or black almanacs of the past centuries and say: "I'm glad that their past is a torch for our future."

--Augusta Dancer

Grandma Jones

Who is the one that we run to when a whipping is due?

Grandma Jones, of course, not you!

Who gives us love when no love is due?

Grandma Jones, of course, not you!

What do we say at the end of a day?

Grandma Jones, of course, you've made our day!

--Rose Merry Johnson

Winter Delight

This joyous season
That makes our hearts glow
Is welcome most pleasantly
As the newly-fallen snow.

The children riding on their sleights
As happy as can be;
They never stop to think how wonderful the day
That God hasn't hesitated to let them see.

The mountains, the plains, and the valleys so rich
Are covered with love so tender and dear.
The wind is swift and steady and brisk
That it leaves the mountains, plains and
valleys so clear.

Winter! That great season of snow and ice
Which changes the fowls' direction in flight
And leads our hearts to sacrifice.
And now, I say--isn't this a Winter's Delight?

--Rose Merry Johnson

Reaching Hell

While walking through the hall of hell,
A place I never thought I'd be,
I slowly turned around and saw
Someone walking behind me.

I focused my eyes to see who it was:
I couldn't really tell.
Harder and harder I looked,
And saw that it was Donald Wells.

I asked him what he was doing here:
He said, "Same as you."
Like all of the others,
He'd been a bad boy too.

--John Harris

Friendship

Friendship is a warm summer day
Sitting in the park, watching the kids play
Thinking of how lovely it is to see
All the little children as happy as can be.

Friendship is the sunshine we all feel
It warms our hearts and relieves the chill
It brightens our lives from day to day
It costs a lot but you don't have to pay.

--Bobbie Robertson

Society

Who is this beast, this tyrant
Who cunningly forces his way into our homes
And commands us to abide by his rules?
Who is this adversary who controls our minds
And shapes our thoughts til there is no restraint?

And what scheme is he contriving from one day
to another?
Who can guess when he changes his plot and uses
all sorts of disguises to camouflage
His real purpose and intent from one day
to the other.

That's right--you guessed it!
He is the enemy of all enemies,
Bent on conforming us and on molding
And raping our minds of all common sense
and godliness.
Yes, upon this tyrannical throne, people sit.

--Jacqueline M. Griffin

A Stray

It's a lonely life being a stray
without an owner or a friend
And no place to stay.
To senseless wandering there is no end.

Time and again he's kicked
And run out into the streets
to scavenge and beg
From strangers he meets.

And all his life might amount
to being hungry,
Hunted by dog catchers
And forever seeking a master.
Aren't you glad you're not a stray dog?

--Jacqueline M. Griffin

On the Scene

The police are striking
And the firemen aren't fighting.
The Ayatollah's playing tic-tac-toe,
And the students won't let the hostages go.

Carter's winning the presidential race
While fighting the communists with a
Smile on his face.

California's drenched in torrential rains
And the stock market has more losses than gains.
The country's in a near recession,
And the Census Bureau's ready for the
Big Addition.

So for tomorrow be a little more keen,
And tune in then for On the Scene.

--Jacqueline M. Griffin

Dropping Expository Writing

Mr. Wolf:

I tried so hard;
I did the best I could;
I didn't understand
And nobody understood.
Your teaching method is different
And very unique.
It proves you are a good teacher
Who nobody wants to meet.
I like English,
But not the part we're working on:
I'd rather write a poem
That's meaningful and strong.
I'd like to stay in your class,
But that would be dumb
Because I don't know where you are coming from!
So, the best thing to do
Is drop your class
And leave that F in the past.
I just want to let you know
That I'm going to let you go
Because expository writing is not for me.
The only English I dig is Poetry.

--Sonya L. Johnson

Why?

Why do we wait til a person's gone
Before we tell his worth?
Why do we wait, why not tell him now
He's the finest man on earth?

Why do we wait til a person's gone
To send him flowers galore,
When a single rose would have meant so much
Had we taken it to his door?

Why do we wait til he cannot hear
The things that we might say?
Why put it off, why not tell him now
And share in his joy today?

Of course we're busy, that's our excuse
But why, oh why, do we wait
To tell a person of our love
Until it is much too late?

--Cathy Turner

Goodbye Mind

Departed from my wisest thoughts
Like water down the drain,
Inspired no more by wise thoughts,
They've ceased to come to my brain.
My thoughts are dull and dark and dreary
Like Satan in the night.
I've lost my tongue, my talent, my touch;
I've lost my insight.
I've stated my case and I might add
It's stated very plain;
Goodbye to my work and to my mind,
For I'm totally insane.

--Yulandas Riddle

What Is Time?

What is time? A figure of speech,
Or a matter of moments which we all seek.
Is it just an illusion we hold in mind,
Oh what! Oh what! Pray tell me what
is time?

Is time just a gesture that laughs in
our faces?
Or is it a limit of life or of space?
I must find an answer to this puzzling
rhyme.
Oh what! Oh what! Pray tell me what
is time?

--Yulandas Riddle

The Broncos and the Raiders

On a warm and hazy day in October
The Broncos and Raiders took the field
And not until the game was over
Did anyone know which team would yield.

The Broncos were big, mean, and tough
They came ready to play
The Raiders were strong, powerful, and rough
And also came to play that day.

As time was running out
The Raiders led by seven
And though it could have been a rout
They thought they were in heaven.

The Broncos' luck was soon to change
With a quick touchdown pass
The game was back in range
And ended just that fast.

--Charles Reid

Fighting

You get uptight
and you're ready to fight
you don't even know
if it's wrong or right.

If you lose
you don't know what to do
because all you hear is
boo!, boo!, boo!
If you win you want to
do it again
because you want to be
champ to the end.

But in the long run
no one won,
because fighting for no reason
is really dumb.

--Sonya L. Johnson

The Truly Beautiful

We are the truly beautiful.
Can you tell me, friend,
Where are the truly beautiful,
The ones that are pure within?
Are there any truly beautiful people,
Are there any here on earth?
We all were truly beautiful once,
But only for a short time after birth.

Who are the truly beautiful?
Can you tell me, friend?
There are no truly beautiful,
For we all have sinned.
We all are really ugly,
But it doesn't always show.
The One who sees our ugliness is God,
For he doth know.

You may look attractive to mortal man
Because your outer parts are up to par.
But if you are a Christian fan,
In God's eyes you are a star.

--Yulandas A. Riddle

Special People

There're persons so nice and kind
Who don't mind giving you their time.
If you use it to the best of your knowledge,
I know it will help you through college.

Quizzes, tests, and lectures, too,
Are all part of what they must do.
They try to understand you and help you out,
They try to give you confidence to erase the doubt.

If you try, and try hard,
I'm sure you'll succeed on your part.
These special persons I'm talking about
Are the teachers who'll help you out.

--Gwendolyn Sculark

Listen

Listen not to stupid rumors,
Always have a sense of humor.
Never listen to what others say,
Turn your back and walk away.

People in this world are hard to please,
They always want you on your knees.
Hold up your head and keep your pride.
Others will fall by the wayside.

Show your courage and your skills,
Then you shall have a dream fulfilled.
Listen not to stupid rumors,
Always have a sense of humor.

--Priscilla Thomas

Things I Would Like To Do

I would like to go to Paris to see
Every city, river and sea
Every palace and garden square
Where the weather is mild and fair.

I would like a quiet place
To think of God's amazing Grace
Grace that led Him to the cross
So the world wouldn't be lost.

I would like to say words each day
To brighten lives along the way.

--Daphne Hogan

Dear Lord

Today a new year begins and
I enter it with gladness;
But also with much fear,
For I have tried so many times to
Start the year right.
But my list of resolutions shames
me soon

After it is written.
I come with no resolutions;
Today I surrender my will to you
That my life be hidden in Christ
with God.

Take away the things that blind me,
The selfishness that clouds my sight
To the needs of others,
The silly things that fill my days
And rob me of the peace of knowing God.
Help me see the world through Your eyes,
Dear Lord, that I may be willing
To suffer persecution as You did
That I may truthfully sing,
"I'm a Christian."

I'm not ashamed to bear your name.
As days pass into weeks, and weeks into months,
May I be an instrument in bringing beauty
out of ugliness,
Love out of hate and life out of death.
May I forget those things which are behind
And press toward those things which are before.
But, Lord, please leave just enough memory
To remind me that I have no good in me,
That I must never depend on a guarantee of
the present.

The lessons learned from the past
Should be spiritual growth for the future.

I know, Dear Lord, that if my heart and mind
Are filled with your truth
With great thoughts of who you are
Of your righteousness,
Of your love for me,
Of Christ's death for me,
Of your presence with me,
And of your protection over me,
I will walk a transformed life.

The sins and silly cares of that rob me
Of joy and peaceful living will fade away;
So, Lord, please make me more like Jesus
Each day of this year.
Help me love like Jesus loved
When he said from the cross:
"Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

Help me live the way you want me to live,
For, Lord, this may be the year
When Jesus returns.

--Flora Brooks

The Joy of Loving You

Reminiscing our past of warm togetherness,
Missing you on the days when you are away,
Rejoicing and awaiting your return,
Fantasizing our future in harmonious compatibility,
Knowing you will be there to answer my yearnings,
Waiting optimistically to say sincerely, "I do,"
Accepting you for what you really are
Is all the joy of loving you.

--Jessie Williams

The Bully

Every day at the corner she would be
Waiting there to pick at poor ole me.
Big and tall she would stand,
Strong enough to beat the average man.
She stood there staring at me with her
 evil ole eyes.
She just wanted to hear my painful cries.
As I turned to my friend for help with
 the bully,
I was left alone--fully;
As I walked up to her shaking and slow,
I finally realized there was no other way
 to go.
She balled up her fist and shook it in
 my face;
I knew in a minute blood I would taste.
I found out she wasn't what she seemed to be.
And I was going to put an end to her picking
 on me.
I drew back as far as I could draw;
My right hand landed on her left jaw.
She looked at me in great surprise,
And then she knew that to leave me alone
 would be wise.
She then understood me--fully;
Never again did I have to face that
 ole bully!

--Diane Chase

The Last Ride

I pulled up to the red light in a 406,
Running three 2-barrels and a 4-speed stick.
I glanced in the mirror coming up behind me
And there was a loud green Ford 289.
He yelled real loud, "Ya wanna drag?"
I'll leave you so far you can't see my tag.
I said, "No, not much!"
By that time we popped off the clutch.
He didn't stop for the signs and neither did I.
The police spotted us as we went by.
We went over the hill and hit the black tar;
I looked back and spotted a police car.
By the time we reached dead man's bend,
I was clocking one hundred and ten!
I blew my horn and went around;
When I got the lead I broke it down.
Up the road was a small cafe.
That's where I made my getaway.
On down the road I heard some squealing;
He came back through with his tires 'a pealing.
He was running so fast that he couldn't see;
He ran off the road and hit a tree.

The moral of this story is plain to see--
Don't race or you'll be in jail with me!

--M. C. Tolbert III

A Junkie's Plea

Jimmy Carter is my President, whom I do not want.
He maketh me to lie down at riots on college campuses.
He leadeth me in the path of police brutality.
He gives me a cause.
He makes crime my only source of income.

Yea, though I walk through the Blue Room, I feel high,
My dope is with me. Thy needles and thy pills they
 comfort me.
They throw a party and invite all my enemies.
They pass me a joint, they run my cup over with wine.

Surely pains and cramps will haunt me all the days
 of my life,
And I will trip in the House of Corrections--forever!

--M. C. Tolbert III

